

TOWN OF LOS ALTOS HILLS

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Wireless Communications Facilities Policy

Amended 10/12/2006

Code Sections

Section 10-1.703 (h)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance allows service uses, including “communications facilities”, to be permitted in the Town if a Conditional Use Permit is granted by the Planning Commission and City Council. Section 10-1.1007 (1) of the Code outlines findings which must be made to approve a use permit, including the proper location of the use or facility relative to others in the vicinity, the adequacy of the site to accommodate the use, and that the facility or use will not have an adverse effect on adjacent properties.

Intent:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the desired criteria for siting of wireless communications facilities, generally including monopoles, related antennas, and equipment shelters. As the Town’s land use is virtually entirely residential, wireless communications facilities will be most appropriately located on public or institutional sites existing within the Town. Colocation, location on or near existing buildings, and landscape screening will be desired to minimize the visual impacts of the facilities on neighbors and the public.

Policy:

1. **Priorities for siting** - Wireless communication facilities shall generally be located on properties with priority as follows:
 - a. Town-owned properties
 - b. Foothill College
 - c. Water tanks
 - d. Other public or quasi-public facilities, such as schools or churches
 - e. Residential properties of at least ten (10) acres
2. **Siting on residential parcels** - Wireless communication facilities may be permitted on properties used for residential purposes or vacant parcels intended for residential property owner provides written consent and significant visual impacts are mitigated.
3. **Colocation** – Colocation of wireless communication facilities with other facilities is encouraged to the maximum extend feasible, as long as the colocation is technologically compatible and does not substantially increase visual impacts. The Town will generally require as a condition of approval for any conditional use permit that the applicant permit colocation of other facilities, subject to technological constraints and Town review.

- 3a. Applications for colocation on an existing wireless communications facility shall be subject to an administrative review provided that the following requirement is met:
- The colocated antennas and ground equipment shall be mounted or installed within an existing tower, building, or structure where the physical appearance of the existing facility is not altered to accommodate the additional antennas and equipment.
4. **Landscape screening and color** - Landscape screening shall be required by the Town to minimize the visual impacts of wireless communication facilities. Poles, antennas, and equipment buildings should be painted to blend with the surrounding environment and/or buildings to further minimize visual impacts.
5. **Environmental review** - A Negative Declaration will typically be prepared for review of proposed wireless communication facilities, with special attention to the visual impacts of the facilities. Categorical exemptions may be used where facilities are colocated with or would be minimal additions to existing structures, with negligible additional visual impact.
6. **Antenna master plans** – Any applicant for a wireless communication facility site shall submit applications, to the best of their knowledge, for all sites anticipated to be required by the carrier for a three (3) to five (5) year period, and the request shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission and the City Council as a master plan application.
7. **Terms of permits and abandonment of sites** – Conditional use permits for wireless communications facilities shall be established for periods not to exceed five (5) years, at which time renewal of the permit must be requested by the applicant. More frequent review of the operation of the permit may be made a condition of approval. Approval will also require a written agreement from the applicant that, should the use be discontinued by the carrier, all facilities will be removed not later than ninety (90) days after discontinuance of the use or abandonment. Such a provision shall also be included in any lease with the Town for use of Town lands for wireless communications facilities. The Town may require bonding or other surety to assure the removal of such facilities.
8. Wireless communication firms shall, at the time of application for permits, demonstrate efforts which have been made to inform neighboring residents of the proposed facilities, such as conducting meetings, or mailing fact sheets and/or letters, etc...to neighbors.
9. The Planning Director is authorized to reduce or waive permit fees for any wireless communications facility that is proven to expand wireless coverage in the Town and is structurally capable of colocation.
10. The Planning Director is authorized to administratively approve portable wireless communications facilities also known as cell on wheels or COWs on certain properties as specified in Policy #1 on a temporary basis.